

Application Serial No.: 09/786,369
Reply to Office Action dated March 25, 2004

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 11-18 are presently active in this case, Claim 6 having been amended by way of the present Amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, a restriction requirement was entered and Claims 14-18 were withdrawn from consideration. The Applicant respectfully traverses the restriction requirement based on MPEP § 803, which states:

... If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

The claims of the present invention would appear to be part of an overlapping search area. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully traverses the outstanding restriction requirement on the grounds that a search and examination of the entire application would not place a *serious* burden on the Examiner. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the requirement to elect a single invention be withdrawn, and that a full examination on the merits of all of the pending claims be conducted.

The drawings were objected to for not showing a functional member attachment portion including recesses and protrusions, as recited in Claim 11. Submitted concurrently herewith is a Replacement Sheet which includes a new Figure 5 to address the objection by including protrusions 40 and 41, which are described in the written description on page 12, line 21, though page 13, line 2. Additionally, a complete set of formal drawings is being

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submitted herewith as requested in the Official Action. Accordingly, the Applicant requests the withdrawal of the objections to the drawings.

Claim 6 was objected to for a minor informality. Claim 6 has been amended as suggested on page 3 of the Official Action. Accordingly, the Applicant requests the withdrawal of the objection to Claim 6.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Official Action rejected Claim 1 because Claim 1 recites that “the inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion” and because the Examiner believes that page 18, line 14, through page 19, line 2, of the specification describes that the functional member attachment portion is part of the door trim. The Applicant begins by noting that Claim 1 does not exclude a functional member attachment portion being on the door trim, as well as on the inner door panel. The Applicant also notes that Claim 1 uses open terminology (i.e., Claim 1 includes the term “comprising” in the preamble). Furthermore, the present application discloses a door grip-fitting site (7) and a door knob-fitting site (8). In a non-limiting embodiment described on page 12, lines 8-16, sealed sites that are sealed joints between the inner door panel and the door trim can be used as the door grip-fitting site (7) and the door knob-fitting site (8). Thus, the functional member attachment portions are not limited, in this embodiment, to solely the inner door panel or to solely the door trim, but rather the functional member attachment portions in this embodiment are present at the sealed sites formed by both the inner door panel and the door trim. Page 18, line 14, through page 19, line 2, of the specification does not contradict this

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discussion. Accordingly, as disclosed in the application, a functional member attachment portion can be formed on the inner door panel, on the door trim, or on both the inner door panel and the door trim. Claim 1 recites a configuration in which the inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion. The Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is definite.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 11, this claim recites a functional member attachment portion that includes recesses and protrusions. The Applicants submit that such a configuration is clearly recited in Claim 1, and described on page 12, line 8, through page 13, line 17. New Figure 5 depicts a non-limiting embodiment of such a configuration that includes an inner door panel (2) with a functional member attachment portion having recesses including an upper shock absorption site (5) and a lower shock absorption site (6), and protrusions including an upper protrusion (40) and a lower protrusion (41), which can be used to mount a door windowpane-sliding mechanism or any other mechanisms (see page 12, lines 23-24). The Applicant submits that Claim 11 is definite.

Accordingly, the Applicant requests the withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejections.

The Official Action states that Claims 1, 3-7, and 11-13 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. As discussed above, the Applicant submits that the indefiniteness rejections have been overcome. Thus, the Applicant submits that Claims 1, 3-7, and 11-13 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 14-18 are considered allowable as they recite features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the references of record. The Applicant submits that the

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cited references do not teach or suggest a method comprising the step of forming an inner door panel and a door trim of thermoplastic resin into an integral one-piece unit by a blow-molding process, wherein the inner door panel and the door trim are formed from a single parison with a tip end of the inner door panel being bonded and integrated with the door trim at at least one part, as recited in independent Claim 14.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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